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First competition recogni

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By Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.)

One eats dust. The other jobs differ, both soldiers see light. That may be why they

"Good leadership is unique styles," said Sgt. 1st Class Je first DA-level NCO of the Y different, and every situation leadership styles. Everyone motivates them, and experience situations teaches you whe

Stitzel is an infantry s to the 3rd U.S. Infantry (Th ton, D.C. His counterpart, th Soldier of the Year, is Spc. J calibrations specialist work 95th Maintenance Company, While Brown works in an e for different leadership styl

"I like the participativ that's what we use in the sh leader- and team-oriented, delegated authority. But lea situation."

For example, Brown's electrical and electronic equ aviation unit his detachmen part, Brown and the others checklists and field manual proper procedures in check equipment. Some of the wo exposure to high-voltage el

"Usually it's best ju first when you see a warni Brown said. "Sometimes yo done, and you can always g understand why you did it

The Army has long t leadership styles are the au According to Stitzel and Br is best able to switch styles and best able to motivate so situation.

"Whenever I get new I make sure they understand they were my kids, but not I Stitzel said. "When they're



Competitors in the first DA-level NCO and Soldier of the Year Competition cover ground at Fort A.P. Hill, Va., during a three-day test of NCO skills and knowledge.



A contestant shoots an azimuth during the night-time portion of the land navigation course. Other events included a written test, the Army Physical Fitness Test and M-16 qualification firing.

Photos by U.S. Army 55th Sign. Co., Combat Camera

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The Army's best

Phil Tegtmeier

her fights it. While their leadership in the same y're the best in the Army. Using all the leadership Jeffery Stitzel, the Army's Year. "Every situation's on calls for one of the e has something that ence in handling different n to use which style."

soldier, currently assigned e Old Guard) in Washing- ne Army's first DA-level Justin Brown. He is a ing for a detachment of the Baumholder, Germany. electronics shop, the need les is just as apparent.

ve style of leadership, and op," Brown said. "We're and we have a lot of adership depends on the

s work involves testing ipment, mostly from the at supports. For the most he works with use s to ensure they follow ing and repairing the rk involves the risk of ectrical sources. t to follow the directions ng or caution statement," ou have to get the work go back afterward and that way."

ught that the two poles of thorian and democratic. own, the charismatic leader s for the given situation oldiers to perform in any

y soldiers into the platoon, d that I will treat them like like they were children," good, I'll brag about them

to Grandma. And when they mess up, I'll take them aside, discipline them if I have to. I tell my soldiers I love my kids, and punishing my kids is one of the hardest things a parent can do. Soldiers will respect you when they know you're going to stand up for them, just like when you stand up for your kids when someone messes with them. My soldiers know I will never do anything illegal, unethical or immoral to them, and they follow my orders whenever they have to."

When soldiers have leadership like that, they'll follow orders with more enthusiasm, according to Brown.

Willingness to teach

"You can spot someone (a leader) willing to teach you. You know, sometimes someone will be real short in giving you an answer. It's much easier to learn from someone who doesn't look at you like some intellectual inferior, who shares information with you about why you do things a certain way," Brown said. "Discipline depends on the leader. If leaders display pride in their work, in their soldiers and in their country, then that rubs off on the soldier."

Brown described events that took place in his unit following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on America. He said the unit made a big push to clear out its maintenance backlog and tackle some of the projects that were waiting in the wings for a while.

"We were working 'til 2100 hours every day for three weeks. It got to the point where we were getting a little more lax in our discipline, a little more ornery," Brown explained. "Our leaders didn't say, 'Go do what you're told.' They sat us down and explained how the units we were supporting were using the equipment to keep their tanks and helicopters mission-ready. They said we were just doing our part to defend our country. When you know you're doing your part in something like that, you take more pride in what you do."

And, although Brown admitted the explanation didn't make him like his extra hours more, it did make the work go better and faster.

"I've been in the Army for 15 years now," Stitzel said. "I remember when I was younger I'd gripe about the same things my soldiers gripe about today. But you know what? It doesn't make me angry to hear them complain. I see it as my chance to say to them,

'Why not look at it this way?' It's good to give a purpose. If your soldiers understand why they're doing something, they'll remember whatever task you're trying to teach forever."

Stitzel said it was something like what FM 100-6, Information Operations, calls "situational awareness" that gave him a leg up on preparing for the board.

"Anyone can use their short-term memory and memorize a bunch of stuff long enough to pass a board. Understanding is about knowing why you do things," Stitzel said. "If I can see a thing myself and understand why it's that way, then I can give someone else a better answer and I can remember facts much longer."

Since Stitzel sees how it can work for him, he figures it can work for his soldiers.

"The NCO Corps has so many people with so many different backgrounds and experiences that we have a strength like no other Army in the world," Stitzel said. "It's not brainwashing. It just works. We have an all-volunteer Army — one of the largest companies in the world. There's a reason why people work for the military."

Leadership in the civilian world

He said that many former soldiers fit in well in the civilian sector because the civilian sector uses leadership principles the military has refined over the years.

"I don't know of many companies in the civilian world where you could convince your workers that taking that hill is the right thing to do," Stitzel said. "I'm proud of the fact that we will, and I wouldn't change my profession for anything."

Military leadership principles motivate soldiers; and motivation, according to Brown, starts with the little things.

"We have built respect in our unit," Brown said. "I know there's talk like we're just civilians in BDUs, blah, blah, blah. We want to show people that maintenance and support people can soldier like anyone else. If we go to the field and share a location with an infantry or engineer unit, the last thing we want is for them to look at us and say, 'Why do we have to be out here with them?'"

One thing Brown has noticed his leaders stress is the need for hands-on training in field craft and Common Task Training subjects.

"We were just out in the training area this morning, and our sergeants had us doing fighting

positions. One of the soldiers gave the class, and the NCOs were there to help him along and to help explain what we were doing. Because of training restrictions, we couldn't actually dig, but I got a much better idea of what it takes to build a fighting position."

Leadership influences motivation

Brown used the fighting position to carry on with his example of how leadership can influence motivation levels.

"It's one thing if your leader says, 'You'd better dig a good fighting position because you'll be out here for hours freezing in the cold.' It's another thing altogether if you have a leader who tells you you'll be out for extended periods of time, and 'here's how you keep your feet warmer,' and 'make sure you take out your cold-weather gear and extra socks.'"

He said the one type of leader makes you dread ever having to pull guard duty. The second helps you understand that the mission may not always be pleasant, but if you take precautions and plan ahead, you can handle any mission you're assigned.

Both Stitzel and Brown attribute their success in the board competition to one thing — self-motivation.

"When I was out in the NCO competition at DA, I saw most of your participants were the basic Type-A personalities. All were self-confident, all had high self-esteem," Stitzel recalled. "As a matter of fact, I talked to the SMA on the side and told him I was going to win this thing. But my competition wasn't against the others (23 soldiers and NCOs competed, representing all the Army's major commands). I was competing against the standards. I knew how many points were available for each of the events, and I knew how well I could perform toward them."

He said he was glad the Army Physical Fitness Test was the first event, because he knew that would be the hardest event for him. Other events at the competition held at Fort A.P. Hill, Va., Oct. 23-27 included a written test, a road march and M-16 qualification firing on one of the post's ranges.

Make standards clear

"When I got out of the APFT with a 298, I was at minus two. And I was determined I wasn't going to lose many more points," Stitzel said. "I'm the same way with my soldiers. I am clear cut on the fact that we have to meet the standards, but I also help my soldiers understand the standards so they have personal reasons for wanting to meet them."

Brown, too, noticed something in his fellow competitors. He explained that in a lot of the boards he went through to get to the DA-level competition a lot of the soldiers took part because they had to. In some cases, the soldiers went to the soldier of the month board only to gain experience for a promotion board.

"When I got to the DA competition, it was the first time where everyone who was there was there because they wanted to be there," Brown said. "I guess I won because I wanted it a little more than the others."

But while leadership styles can be debated and motivation techniques vary, Stitzel feels one element of leadership provides the glue that holds everything together.



Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery Stitzel, the first DA-level NCO off the Year, is currently serving as an infantryman with the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard) at Fort Myer, Va. A native of Michigan, Stitzel is married and has three children. Stitzel is working on a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

"Loyalty is a big one. You have three kinds of loyalty: to your superiors, to your peers and to your subordinates," Stitzel said. "Sometimes, it can seem that loyalties conflict, like when a soldier tells you something the officer ordered [the platoon] to do won't work."

He said that, at face value, an NCO could only be loyal to the superior and order the soldier to do the work anyway, or the NCO could be loyal to the soldier and have the soldier ignore the officer's orders.

"But there really is no conflict in situations like that, if you remember your biggest loyalty is to the Army," Stitzel said. He said the easy solution is to be loyal to the soldier and have him do the work right, and be loyal to the officer and tell him about the changes.

He also added that, as NCOs move up the chain and assume platoon sergeant and first sergeant duties, they will find maintaining their loyalties to the officer as indispensable.

"My relationship with the lieutenant who is our platoon leader is almost like one I would have with my parents," Stitzel said. "I have 15 years of experience, and the lieutenant has maybe two, so the L.T. finds himself behind the power curve sometimes. Like, he'll come in asking if we should do something, and I look at him like he was two years late. Well, he knows we know what we're doing, but he checks on us anyway. And that's good, because what happens if I forget something?"

Keep soldiers informed

Stitzel said his relationship with his platoon leader requires trust and open communication. That trust, Stitzel said, has its roots in shared loyalties that open communica-

tions maintain. Brown agreed on the importance of having leaders who keep him informed.

"If we're doing training for mobilization, for example, if someone tells me we're doing it because we're probably going to end up going somewhere, I tell myself, 'okay,' and I get back to work," Brown said. He said when his leaders trust him with information, he feels more motivated to do his share of the work.

What's true in a maintenance shop also applies in the infantry world. Stitzel said he makes it a point to keep his men informed, because when the whole platoon understands the reason behind the mission, it's easier for everyone to get along.

"I don't care if my soldiers like one another," Stitzel said. "But they know they have to respect and trust the person they're with. Just look at [Major League Baseball players Barry] Bonds and [Jeff] Kent. Everyone knows they don't get along at all, but Bonds still told management if they let Kent go, they'd have to let him go too. It's not about popularity. You just have to trust the people you work with. When you go into combat, that's the guy who's going to be covering your flank."

Working from a shared vision, empowering soldiers to make more decisions and building leadership that relies on flexible styles are all hallmarks of the next generation of soldiers, according to Force XXI doctrine.

One of the benefits of being the Army's NCO of the Year is winning the chance to name your next duty position.



A grader scores one of the contestants during the Common Task Test skills portion of the competition.

"I was going to leave here and ask for another airborne position," Stitzel said. "But my mentors told me I might want to look at going mechanized [infantry], volunteering to work with the Stryker (the Army's new infantry fighting vehicle). So I got to thinking that maybe I should think about going that direction, because if I get to be a command sergeant major and am assigned to a mechanized unit then, how will I be in a position to help the commander make good decisions if I have no experience. And believe me, this Stryker is here to stay. I spent two weeks around the Pentagon after I won this award and all the bigwigs were talking about it."

Glance down the road

While NCOs are charged with staying in their lanes, they might want to make it a point to take an occasional glance down the road. Stitzel has seen how that can benefit senior NCOs, and Brown said why he thought young soldiers needed to be forward-looking as well.

"I've been in a few years now. I go before the E-5 board Dec. 2. Pretty soon I'll have the responsibility to learn and teach my soldiers," Brown said. "I think I have an idea of the best styles of training and how to deal with leadership. And I've seen some leaders where I say, 'wow, if I turn out like that I hope I'll shoot myself.' It's good to stay in your lane, but every once in a while it's good to glance down the road and put things into perspective."

One other perspective Stitzel keeps in mind is the one he shares with many soldiers — that of a parent.

"You can't balance family and the Army anymore," Stitzel said. "I'll bet we have guys in Afghanistan who've been there more than a year. With the deployments we go on and the missions we face, you can't spend equal time on family and your career. What I try to do is set an example for my kids and show them how I'd like them to be — a role model for them and hope they turn out all right."

It's kind of like that with his soldiers, Stitzel said. "I love my soldiers as much as I love my kids," he said. "And I treat them that way. Maybe they'll turn out all right, too."



Spc. Justin M. Brown, the first DA-level Soldier of the Year, is currently serving as a test, measurement and diagnostic equipment specialist with a detachment of the 95th Maintenance Company in Baumholder, Germany. A native of Illinois, Spc. Brown is working on his associate's degree in general studies.

Sgt. 1st Class Antonio Valentin, FORSCOM

Valentin currently serves as an artillery observer-controller/trainer with the 2nd Battalion, 315th Regiment in New Cumberland, Pa. A native of New Jersey, he is married, has three children, received his associate's degree from Jefferson Community College and is working toward a paralegal degree with the University of Maryland.



Pvt. 1st Class Ryan P. Delaney, FORSCOM

Delaney is a multichannel transmissions system operator/maintainer with Company A, 51st Signal Battalion at Fort Bragg, N. C. Married with three children, he attended Suffolk Community College, the University of Southern Maine and is enrolled full time for the fall semester at Campbell University.



Sgt. 1st Class Reginald D. Sampson, TRADOC

Sampson is serving as a Senior Course Writer and Developer for the Basic Career Counselor Course and the Advanced NCO Course at Fort Jackson, S. C. A native of Texas, he married his high school sweetheart and received his associate's degree from the University of Maryland.



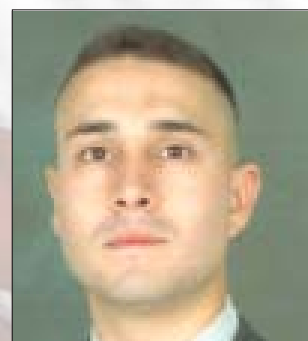
Spc. Daniel C. Davis, TRADOC

Davis serves as a military police corrections specialist with the 705th Military Police Battalion at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. A native of Illinois, Davis' father is a retired master sergeant, and his sister and brother are both serving in the armed forces. He was the Soldier of the Year for TRADOC.



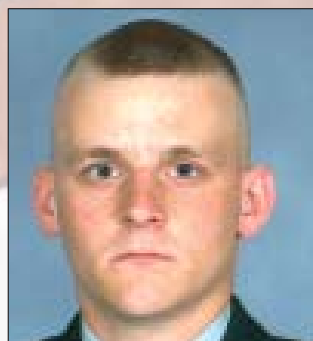
Staff Sgt. Erick R. Macher, USAREUR

Macher currently serves as a field artilleryman with Battery A, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, 1st Infantry Division in Schweinfurt, Germany. A native of California, he has completed 34 hours at the North Central Institute. He is married and has two children.



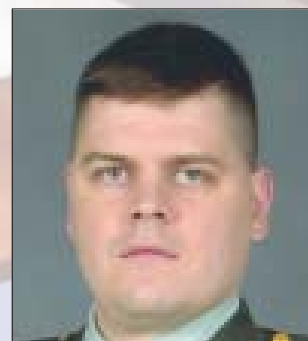
Sgt. Alan J. Suskey, USAREUR

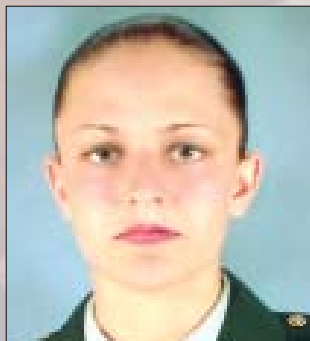
Suskey is a military policeman with the 18th Military Police Brigade in Mannheim, Germany. A native of Florida, his brother, Eric, is currently serving in the U.S. Navy. Suskey was recently named the USAREUR Soldier of the Year.



Staff Sgt. Nelson B. Justice III, USACE

Justice currently serves as an instructor with the U. S. Army Prime Power School at Fort Belvoir, Va. A native of Kentucky, he is married, received his bachelor's degree from Murray State University and would like to pursue a master's degree in electrical engineering.





Staff Sgt. Khalida S. Hendricks, USFK

Hendricks is currently serving as a counterintelligence agent with Company B, 102nd Military Intelligence Battalion in South Korea. A native of New Mexico, she has an associate's degree in Arabic with honors from Monterey Peninsula College and would like to complete a bachelor's degree in Middle Eastern studies.

Spc. Kevin M. Murphy, USFK

Murphy currently serves as a legal specialist with the 19th Theater Support Command at Camp Henry, South Korea.

A Massachusetts native, he was the 2002 Eighth Army Soldier of the Year. He is working toward a degree with the University of Maryland.



Staff Sgt. Robert A. Barlow, AMC

Barlow is currently serving as a radio and communications security repairer with the Combat Equipment Battalion-Luxembourg. A native of South Carolina, he has a daughter and is working on an associate's degree in computer networking. Barlow is a recipient of the Meritorious Service Medal and is the U.S. Army Materiel Command NCO of the Year.

Staff Sgt. Gerald Allen Wood, MEDCOM

Wood is currently serving as a medical specialist with the U.S. Army Medical Activity in Wuerzburg, Germany. Wood graduated high school in Kingston, Jamaica, and received his associate's degree from Miami Dade Community College. He is married, has one child and was the U.S. Army Medical Command NCO of the Year.

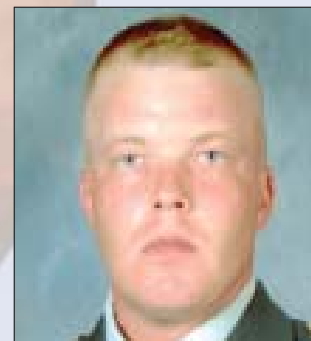


Spc. Esmeralda L. Hernandez, MEDCOM

Hernandez is a medical laboratory specialist with the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. A Texas native, she is married and is working toward the completion of her master's degree in business administration.

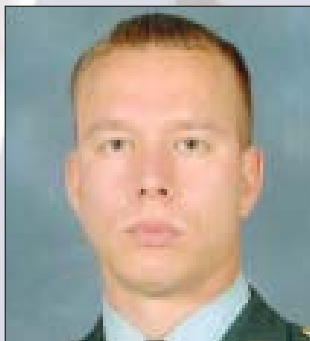
Staff Sgt. Timothy A. Morgan III, USARPAC

Morgan currently serves as a military policeman with the 25th Military Police Company at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. A native of Virginia, he is married and has two children.



Sgt. Rebecca A. Young, USARPAC

Young serves as an interrogator at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, with the 125th Military Intelligence Battalion. A native of Idaho, she holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of San Diego and is currently pursuing a master's degree in international relations. She is married.



Staff Sgt. Darrick M. Noah, SMDC

Noah currently serves as a satellite communications system specialist with the Army Space Regional Satellite Support Center-Pacific at Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii. A native of Chicago, he is married and is pursuing his bachelor's degree in business. He recently completed Marine Corps Jungle Warfare Training.

Sgt. Sherman L. Johnson, SMDC

Johnson is a satellite network controller team chief with Company B, 1st Satellite Control Battalion at Fort Meade, Md. A native of Virginia, Johnson hopes to obtain a bachelor's degree in architecture. He recently graduated on the commandant's list from PLDC.

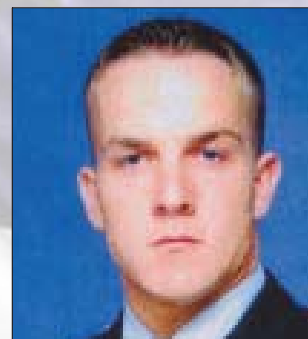


Staff Sgt. Peter N. Johnson, USASOC

Johnson currently serves as a psychological operations specialist with the 17th Psychological Operations Battalion in Illinois. A native of Illinois, he received his bachelor's degree (summa cum laude) in criminal justice and his master's degree in urban life and learning from Loyola University.

Spc. Joshua C. Simmons, USASOC

Simmons is currently a radio repairer and technician with Company C, Support Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group at Fort Bragg, N. C. From Florida, he has completed an Advanced Computer and Network Repair Course.



Pvt. 1st Class Christopher M. Clayton, National Capital Region

Clayton is a signal support systems specialist with the 3rd U. S. Infantry (The Old Guard), at Fort Myer, Va. A native of West Virginia, Clayton is married and has one child. He is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree through West Virginia University.

Staff Sgt. Lance K. Pinnow, USARSO

Pinnow is currently serving as a military policeman with the U.S. Army Garrison Military Police Detachment at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico. A native of Montana, he assisted in the mobilization of two national guard platoons and one reserve company following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.



Spc. Raymond Thomas Nagley, USARSO

Nagley is currently a counterintelligence agent with Company D, 202nd Military Intelligence Battalion at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico. A native of Texas, he is married and has a daughter. Nagley and his family were nominated from USARSO to the Association of the United States Army as the Volunteer Family of the Year.

